UNITED
NATIONS

E

Economic and Social
Council

Distr.
GENERAL

E/CN.7/1998/5
3 February 1998

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

COMMISSION ON NARCOTIC DRUGS
Forty-first session
Vienna, 11-13 March 1998
Item 5 of the provisional agenda*

MONITORING OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM-WIDE ACTION PLAN ON DRUG ABUSE CONTROL AND OTHER COORDINATION MATTERS

Coordination of drug control activities within the United Nations system

Note by the Secretariat

Summary

The present report delineates the impact of United Nations reform measures on drug control activities and provides examples of collaborative activities being undertaken in this area by United Nations entities. The update of the United Nations System-Wide Action Plan on Drug Abuse Control will be made available to the Commission in a conference room paper (E/CN.7/1998/CRP.1).

*E/CN.7/1998/1.

V.98-50666 (E)

CONTENTS

	Paragraphs	Page
INTRODUCTION	1	2
I. STATUS OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM-WIDE ACTION PLAN ON DRUG ABUSE CONTROL	2	2
II. FIELD-LEVEL COLLABORATION	3-28	2
A. United Nations reform	7-19	3
B. Collaborative activities in drug control	20-28	5
III. CONCLUSION	29	8

INTRODUCTION

1. The present note is submitted in response to General Assembly resolution 48/112, section IV, of 20 December 1993, in which the Assembly requested that the United Nations System-Wide Action Plan on Drug Abuse Control be reviewed and updated on a biennial basis.

I. STATUS OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM-WIDE ACTION PLAN ON DRUG ABUSE CONTROL

2. The General Assembly first requested the development of the United Nations System-Wide Action Plan on Drug Abuse Control in its resolution 44/141 of 15 December 1989. After various attempts had been made to formulate a working document, the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC), in 1995, charged its Subcommittee on Drug Control to revitalize the System-Wide Action Plan and render it more operational. The Subcommittee subsequently identified six initial subsectoral topics, on which it formulated action plans. These comprised the first version of the revitalized System-Wide Action Plan and were made available to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs at its thirty-ninth session (E/CN.7/1996/CRP.1) and to the Economic and Social Council and the Assembly (A/51/129-E/1996/53). The Subcommittee has since prepared three additional subsectoral plans of action for inclusion in the System-Wide Action Plan and initiated a review of the implementation. A full report on the implementation and updating of the System-Wide Action Plan will be made available to the Commission at its forty-first session (E/CN.7/1998/CRP.1). The Subcommittee requested the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) to undertake an evaluation of the System-Wide Action Plan process in 1998 and to report on the results obtained to the Subcommittee at its sixth session, which is scheduled to meet in September 1998.

II. FIELD-LEVEL COLLABORATION

3. Over the past two years, the United Nations has placed increasing emphasis on the importance of inter-agency cooperation at the field level. UNDCP has been actively involved in a number of initiatives through its participation in the ACC machinery, in particular the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions (CCPOQ). These include the development of the "strategic framework" approach to conflict and

post-conflict situations; efforts to define more clearly and strengthen the ability of the United Nations system to interact with civil society; and the coordination of programming and operations at the country level through the Resident Coordinator system. UNDCP fully supports the Resident Coordinator approach and the development of the country team concept. UNDCP participates whenever appropriate in the workshops on country team management organized by the United Nations Staff College project at Turin, Italy.

4. Another forum within the ACC machinery, the ACC Subcommittee on Drug Control, at its fifth session, unanimously underscored the importance of field-level collaboration. In that context, the Subcommittee decided to review the applicability of the System-Wide Action Plan to field-level operations and agreed on the importance of publicizing "best practices" of collaborative undertakings.

5. Resident coordinators in high-priority countries are encouraged to create thematic groups on drug control to ensure that the relevant parts of the United Nations system are sensitized to the need to devote attention to the drug issue in their own priorities and to encourage them to undertake activities in association with UNDCP or in support of UNDCP initiatives. The case of Viet Nam can serve as a model in this respect.

6. Both the CCPOQ initiatives and the more informal Joint Consultative Group on Policy (in which UNDCP is an observer) have offered the opportunity to associate the Programme with other initiatives designed to strengthen coordination at the field level, especially in the area of programming. Those initiatives have now coalesced in the context of the United Nations reform process, in particular the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF). The involvement of UNDCP in the reform process is described below.

A. United Nations reform

7. In March 1997, the Secretary-General presented his track I reform proposals, a package of "managerial initiatives and decisions" falling within his authority that he could take immediately. The track II proposals, which the Secretary-General presented in July 1997, incorporated further measures within his authority, including those requiring consultations with and guidance from Member States, as well as proposals on more fundamental issues that could only be decided by Member States. The General Assembly at its fifty-second session endorsed 29 action items in the report on reform submitted by the Secretary-General (A/51/950 and Add.1-6), including a proposal to create an Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention.

8. In the context of the reform, the Secretary-General established within the Secretariat four sector groups to advise him on humanitarian affairs, political affairs, economic and social affairs and operational development.

1. United Nations Development Group

9. The United Nations Development Group is one of the above-mentioned sector groups. It deals with issues pertaining to operational activities. The Group consists of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat, the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), the United Nations Office for Project Services, UNDCP, the Joint and Co-sponsored United Nations Programme on Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the World Food Programme (WFP) and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), while its Executive Committee is composed of the executive heads of UNICEF, UNDP and UNFPA with a provision for the participation of other organizations in areas relevant to their interests.

10. Discussions within the Group resulted in the elaboration of specific reform proposals, the cornerstone of which is the move towards a greater integration of United Nations operational activities through the adoption of a common strategic framework for the individual programmes of the United Nations funds and programmes

(and, ultimately, the specialized agencies). The UNDAF process entails the revision and strengthening of the Resident Coordinator system, as a crucial step. UNDCP has taken part in this multifaceted process: its focal point for this matter participated in the joint training of all facilitators, in New York in September 1997, and subsequently assisted the United Nations country teams of Morocco and Senegal to plan and carry out the UNDAF process. Furthermore, UNDCP has contributed drug-related indicators for common country assessment, in the context of the same exercise. UNDCP supports the implementation of the other measures proposed by the Group and included in the report on reform, and will, in particular, contribute to the promotion of a more unified United Nations presence at the country level to ensure greater coherence and unity of purpose in assistance programmes.

2. Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs

11. The Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs is another sector group established in the framework of United Nations reform. It is composed of the executive heads of the following departments, funds, programmes and offices in charge of economic and social matters: the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Economic Commission for Africa, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, the Economic Commission for Europe, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, UNDCP, UNDP, the United Nations University, the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research and the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development.

12. One of the objectives of the Committee is to identify measures designed to ensure a greater coherence of views within the United Nations entities. In the interest of clarifying the mandate of the Organization, each department, fund, programme and office has been requested to specify its core functions; UNDCP has participated in the exercise.

13. The current policy and action of UNDCP are totally in line with the proposals and initiatives that have emerged from the work of the Committee, in particular those designed to develop fruitful cooperative links between non-governmental actors and the United Nations, and in particular to ensure a better interface between the private sector and the United Nations. As a matter of fact, cooperation with non-governmental organizations remains one of the priorities of UNDCP. With regard to the private sector, it is worth mentioning that the third International Private Sector Conference on Drugs in the Workplace and the Community was organized by UNDCP in collaboration with the International Labour Organization in Malaysia in September 1997 for the Asian and Pacific region. The objectives of the Conference were to mobilize the private sector in efforts to reduce drug abuse and to promote partnership between the business world and the community in activities related to drug demand reduction. UNDCP also supports the implementation of the Committee's initiative for the creation of a "dividend for development" from savings in administration and other overhead costs.

3. Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention

14. Various calls by the Commission and other bodies for heightened collaboration between UNDCP and the former Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Division of the Secretariat were brought to fruition with the establishment by the General Assembly, as part of the Secretary-General's reform package, of the Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention, which comprises UNDCP and the Centre for International Crime Prevention. In practical terms, this development has resulted in the consolidation of the Office of the Director-General and Executive Director, and in regular consultations of senior staff of both organizational entities in the Senior Policy Coordination Group.

4. Resident Coordinator system

15. In furthering the visibility of a unified United Nations, resident coordinators sometimes also combine country team meetings with meetings with government officials, donors, non-governmental organizations and the media. It has further been noted that the publication of a common system, country team newsletter (e.g. in Bolivia and Viet Nam) not only has a positive impact on the members of the United Nations family in a given country, but also conveys a united image to recipient and donor countries alike.

16. In the context of reform measures, the opportunity now exists for the funds and programmes of the United Nations, as well as the specialized agencies, to participate actively in the selection and performance evaluation processes with respect to resident coordinators. This is of particular relevance as it is apparent that the strength of the Resident Coordinator system depends to a large extent on the individuals in those positions.

17. In practical terms, the active engagement of the resident coordinators has resulted in multi-agency activities related to drug control in several countries, as illustrated below. Whereas only 20 per cent of the resident coordinators' annual reports for 1995 received by UNDCP mentioned drug control, 30 per cent of the reports received for 1996 contained information on the subject. In an effort to draw further attention to the importance of considering drug-related issues in other contexts, UNDCP is issuing a handbook with guidelines on how resident coordinators can contribute to drug control efforts in their country of assignment.

5. United Nations Development Assistance Framework

18. UNDAF is a key component of United Nations reform for operational activities at the country level. It is a planning framework, based on common country assessments, with common objectives and time-frames that will serve as the basis for the preparation of individual country programmes or projects for the participating funds and programmes. It is also the framework for follow-up at the country level to recent international conferences and to decisions of the General Assembly. UNDAF builds on country strategy notes, where they exist, and therefore reflects national priorities and the contribution of the United Nations system towards addressing them. Specialized agencies and Bretton Woods institutions are also encouraged to participate in the exercise in order to promote visible unity among the different United Nations entities active in a given country. UNDCP participates in the common country assessment and UNDAF exercise in countries in which it maintains a field presence or in which it considers it a priority from a drug control point of view and wishes to utilize UNDAF as an opportunity to have drug control implications considered by the country teams early in the planning stage of their development activities.

19. While each of these exercises has its merits, there is still a need to rationalize and consolidate existing coordination mechanisms. It is also worth noting that in all cases of "successful" coordination, the additional effort involved in putting coordination theory into practice is felt by all partners involved. It will therefore be necessary to ascertain that the yield from such investment justifies the input. With this consideration in mind, the following activities are brought to the attention of the Commission as examples of best practices that it may be possible to replicate in other situations.

B. Collaborative activities in drug control

20. There is general recognition at the field level that collaborative activities need further refinement to achieve the best levels of efficiency. Differences in procedures and programming systems, as well as variations in approval requirements under different governing bodies, are commonly quoted causes of lack of collaborative action. Such situations promise to be alleviated through an increase in joint programming and further delegation of authority to field offices. It must also be borne in mind that direct consultations and participation in meetings are the natural starting points for collaboration and their importance should therefore not be underestimated.

21. Various types of collaboration have been encouraged over the past two years. The applicability and success of each depend on various factors in a given situation, such as national priorities, political climate and donor preferences. Several types of collaboration are discussed below.

1. Thematic groups

22. Thematic groups on drug control issues have so far been established in seven countries and are proving in most cases to be productive in that initiatives arise from them. A prominent example is in Viet Nam, where interest was awakened in the general development requirements of UNDCP project areas, from which have resulted a number of supportive activities by other agencies. Similarly, interest is also being raised in support of alternative development activities in Colombia and the Lao People's Democratic Republic and discussions with other agencies regarding possible collaboration are in progress in Myanmar.

23. It is also important for representatives of UNDCP to participate in other thematic groups so as to be able to draw attention immediately to drug-related implications, as appropriate. This is often the case, especially in the areas of health, HIV/AIDS and education, as well as in non-sectoral country team meetings. Particularly successful has been the Programme's participation in the HIV/AIDS group in Barbados, which has led to the Joint and Co-sponsored United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS to fund part of the UNDCP contribution to a UNICEF project, and its participation in Nigeria, where, in various groups, possibilities for collaboration and joint ventures have been identified.

2. Incorporation of drug control elements in activities of other entities

24. A number of entities, notably UNICEF and UNFPA, have encouraged their field staff to assess the possibility of including a drug control component in their activities. This has already resulted in the insertion of drug abuse prevention activities in various projects of both these entities in Kenya, as well as in several UNICEF street children projects in Latin America. More activities are in the planning and approval stages with these and other agencies, such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. The tendency is also to move forward from the initial small, individual interventions to wider, programmatic and replicable approaches, as in the case of the global project launched by UNICEF on health and development rights of children and youth in crisis.

3. Other entities joining UNDCP activities

25. In some countries where UNDCP has alternative development programmes, other entities have been encouraged to visit project sites and contribute to the general development of the areas. This is particularly pertinent in the case of Viet Nam, where, under the leadership of the Resident Coordinator, a country team visit in 1997 has resulted in related activities being undertaken by a number of organizations in the health, education and employment fields. Organizations are encouraged to undertake their own planning so as to facilitate joint or complementary action. In the case of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, for example, UNDP, the International Fund for Agricultural Development and the United Nations Capital Development Fund are all involved in a multi-province aid scheme that has as one of its objectives the elimination of illicit cultivation of the opium poppy. Efforts aimed at possible collaboration are also currently under way in Colombia and Myanmar. The UNDCP strategy for the elimination of opium cultivation in Afghanistan, which builds on the mobilization of partners, both United Nations and others, will support efforts to provide alternative sources of income to those currently dependent on illicit cash crops. This type of approach is essential to the long-term success of alternative development, which will require input from many other aid sources in addition to input from UNDCP itself.

4. Joint planning and activities

26. In some cases where the insertion of a drug control component in the activities of other agencies has been attempted, efforts have been thwarted by the time factor—i.e. the activities were already agreed upon between the agency concerned and the Government, if not already up and running. These situations have proved the point that the ideal time for integrating drug control and development activities is in the planning stage. Governments are therefore encouraged to formulate their drug control master plans within the context of their overall development plans and UNDAF, where applicable, and to alert other United Nations agencies to the possibility of making contributions.

27. A number of activities are under way involving UNDCP and other entities. Examples of these include the following:

(a) A joint UNDCP/Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) fact-finding mission in 1997 for preparatory assistance for the rehabilitation of areas affected by opium poppy cultivation in Colombia produced valuable input for future UNDCP assistance in alternative development that will incorporate forestry management technologies developed and tested by FAO;

(b) UNDP is co-financing a UNDCP subregional project on reducing illicit drug use in the highlands of east Asia (Cambodia, China, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam);

(c) UNDCP and the World Health Organization (WHO) have developed a global initiative on primary prevention of substance abuse, which will be implemented by a consortium of non-governmental organizations in different geographical sites in central and eastern Europe, southern Africa and south-east Asia;

(d) UNDCP joined a larger UNICEF human development project in Bolivia on the protection of children's and young people's rights. The project, which provides direct support to 143 municipal ombudsmen of children's rights, as well as advocacy in the country's other 168 municipalities, will ensure that an integral drug abuse prevention component is included in the services provided by those institutions;

(e) UNDCP and the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute are collaborating in India and Brazil in the first phase of a project to strengthen national criminal justice systems.

28. The following examples demonstrate a shift towards multi-entity endeavours to consolidate a variety of mutually supporting sectoral expertise to achieve a shared goal:

(a) The UNDCP/Joint and Co-sponsored United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS/UNICEF "Goldtooth" project for the training of drug abuse prevention trainers;

(b) In the Caribbean, UNDCP has joined a larger UNICEF programme on health and family life education, which also includes cooperation with WHO, the Pan American Health Organization and the Joint and Co-sponsored United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS;

(c) UNDCP joined a multisectoral UNDP project, entitled "Promotion of community-based development for poverty eradication and drug abuse prevention in drug-trafficking and/or drug-producing areas of Kyrgyzstan", which is being implemented by the United Nations Volunteers;

(d) The global project on health and development rights of children and youth in crisis, which has been developed by UNDCP, UNICEF, the Joint and Co-sponsored United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, and

WHO, will help all co-sponsoring entities to develop a more systematic approach to incorporating the drug dimension into their field activities.

III. CONCLUSION

29. What appears to be emerging is a convergence of policy strategies from above and what have been isolated and often very small interventions on the ground. As the development of strategic frameworks, whether sectoral, national or regional, continues, all partners involved in the various aspects of drug control will be able to identify more easily their opportunities for action. In line with this general tendency and in the wave of the United Nations reform, efforts are being made to operationalize the United Nations System-Wide Action Plan on Drug Abuse Control to ensure its effectiveness as a planning tool, especially at the field level. These efforts, among others, are expected to benefit the successful implemenation of the UNDCP global plan for the elimination of illicit coca and opium poppy production.